

School inspection report

14 to 16 October 2025

Westbourne House School

Coach Road
Shopwyke
Chichester
West Sussex
PO20 2BH

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

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Summary of inspection findings

1. The governing body provides effective oversight of school leadership so that the Standards are met. Leaders fulfil their responsibilities well, maintaining a supportive and positive environment for pupils. Arrangements for pupils to share their views with leaders feed effectively into the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning.
2. Leaders provide a broad, balanced and inclusive curriculum. The breadth of subjects offered enables pupils to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding across a range of curriculum areas. Leaders provide a varied and well-resourced programme of after-school activities that promotes social, physical and creative skills.
3. Teachers use their secure subject knowledge to develop pupils' learning effectively and maintain high expectations for pupils' behaviour and achievement. Lessons are well planned and engaging. As a result, pupils are interested in their work and self-motivated.
4. Teacher assessment is regular and purposeful, linked to individual targets that clarify pupils' next steps in learning. Teacher feedback, both verbal and written, is constructive and encourages pupils to reflect on and take responsibility for their learning.
5. Leaders with responsibility for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) ensure that these pupils are effectively supported. As a result, pupils who have SEND make good progress from their starting points.
6. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) receive targeted support either individually or in the classroom when required. This support ensures that pupils who speak EAL make good progress with their English.
7. Children in the early years benefit from a well-planned introduction to school life. The promotion of communication and language skills is embedded across the early years provision, developing children's ability to listen, engage, contribute and express their ideas confidently. A well-resourced woodland environment promotes children's physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing.
8. Leaders ensure that the behaviour policy is effectively implemented and take effective steps to respond to instances of poor behaviour. Pupils learn about being open about and recognising their own feelings as well as showing empathy towards others. As a result, behaviour is good. The school has a clear anti-bullying policy and procedures. Bullying is rare and when it occurs, it is dealt with effectively.
9. Leaders have effective systems and procedures to support the boarding community to feel happy, healthy and secure. They implement suitable boarding policies and procedures. The boarding houses are well resourced and furnished, with pupils appropriately supervised by staff who are safely recruited in line with regulatory requirements.
10. The school premises, including the boarding accommodation, are well maintained with effective systems in place to ensure that the site is secure and safe.
11. Leaders provide meaningful opportunities for pupils to contribute to school life and beyond. They implement a well-structured and carefully sequenced personal, social, health and economic

education (PSHE) curriculum, tailored to the school's specific context and needs. Through this, pupils develop strong social skills, value diversity and make a positive contribution to society.

12. Safeguarding arrangements are effective and comply with statutory guidance. Although the safeguarding policy was initially out of date, leaders updated it during the inspection. Safeguarding leaders are well trained and provide suitable training so that staff understand their duties, including reporting disclosures and low-level concerns. Records are well maintained and referrals are timely and appropriate. All pre-employment checks are accurately recorded in the single central record of appointments (SCR), which leaders and governors review regularly. Internet filtering and monitoring systems are tested routinely, and pupils learn how to stay safe online.

The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- ensure that information is accurately updated and maintained on the school's website in line with the latest statutory guidance.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

13. The governing body works closely with school leaders to provide support and to scrutinise decision-making in order to ensure that the Standards are consistently met. Leaders ensure that most policies comply with statutory requirements and are understood by staff and pupils.
14. Leaders fulfil the school's aims to provide pupils with a broad and inclusive curriculum, which is underpinned by strong community values. Leaders have high expectations for the education and pastoral development of all pupils, which they promote through effective self-evaluation and development planning. Leaders actively seek pupils' views and act on their suggestions.
15. Leaders' oversight across all aspects of school life ensures high-quality teaching and effective safeguarding and pastoral provision. Leaders have appropriate skills and knowledge to fulfil their responsibilities and to actively promote the wellbeing of pupils.
16. Leaders have an appropriate policy in place to manage complaints and respond to parental concerns in line with specified timeframes. However, at the start of the inspection, leaders did not make available the number of complaints registered under the school's complaints procedure during the preceding school year. Leaders rectified the problem before the end of the inspection. All other information is made available or provided as required, either on the school's website or through various documentation.
17. Leaders maintain an open dialogue with external agencies, such as children's services so that they can support pupils effectively. They liaise closely with the local authority, conduct an annual review for pupils who have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan) and provide the local authority with the required information relating to these pupils. Leaders ensure that parents receive regular and detailed written reports across all year groups and subjects. Parents' meetings and comprehensive written reports provide further opportunities for parents to learn about their child's progress, attainment and next steps for learning.
18. Leaders have an effective and comprehensive system for the identification and management of risk. Detailed risk assessments cover all aspects of school life, including premises, activities and educational visits. External audits of risk assessments provide leaders with an additional layer of assurance. Risk assessments for trips are detailed, and post-trip evaluations are carried out. Leaders and governors identify potential contextual risks to pupils and take steps to mitigate these.
19. Governors maintain effective oversight of the school and have a deep understanding of what it does well and areas for development. Designated governors with responsibility for safeguarding, academic and pastoral areas scrutinise leaders' decision-making and offer appropriate challenge and support. Governors receive detailed updates about all aspects of school life and visit the school regularly to meet with leaders and to observe lessons. Subject leaders attend governors' meetings to report on developments in their curriculum area.
20. Leaders ensure that a suitable accessibility plan outlines steps to improve pupils' access to the curriculum and physical environment. Adaptations to the site include the use of assistive technology, specialist classroom resources and access ramps. The school does not discriminate against pupils and meets its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance

21. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

22. Leaders implement a broad, balanced and inclusive curriculum that enables all pupils to make good progress. Leaders evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum and teaching through learning walks and departmental lesson observations. The curriculum is thoughtfully sequenced and adapted to meet the pupils' ages, aptitudes and needs.
23. Pupils gain knowledge, deepen understanding and develop skills across a wide range of subjects in all of the required areas. Through careful planning, leaders ensure the curriculum promotes pupils' social, physical, intellectual, creative and emotional development and that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
24. A range of opportunities both in and beyond the classroom supports the development of pupils' listening and speaking skills. An initiative to develop pupils' thinking skills to support the taught curriculum has been broadly effective. Pupils can explain what they are learning, how it builds on prior learning and why it matters. Teachers plan learning opportunities that encourage confidence, kindness and self-expression.
25. A well-planned curriculum for children in the early years develops their communication and language skills through interactions with each other and the adults in their environment. Adults and children model sentences and pronunciation, and encourage responses to open questioning. In the school's woodland learning environment, early years teachers help children to solve real-world problems, giving children the time to propose solutions and encouraging them to listen actively to others.
26. A literacy programme introduced in the early years helps pupils to make good progress with their reading and writing. In English, younger pupils engage enthusiastically in purposeful activities that foster rich language use and collaboration, while older pupils articulate their learning with confidence and demonstrate a mature understanding that making mistakes is an essential part of the learning process. Pupils make good progress in mathematics because of a well-sequenced curriculum, skilful questioning, and effective feedback. A focus on developing mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills promotes independence and encourages pupils to think for themselves.
27. Leaders use assessment data effectively to inform their strategic planning, for example implementing a policy that focuses on developing pupils' literacy and spelling. Insights into progress and attainment gained from standardised testing are used to track the progress of all groups of pupils. Pupils who have SEND sit additional tests, the results of which are used for more targeted support. Leaders demonstrate an effective understanding of the academic profile of pupils and respond by putting in place additional learning support staff. Pupils whose progress is falling below expectations are encouraged to attend weekly support clinics.
28. Teachers use assessment effectively to inform their planning. Teacher assessment is regular, purposeful and linked to personalised targets that help pupils to understand the next steps in their learning. For example, in mathematics, teachers make effective use of assessment data to inform pupils' target setting. Staff across all subjects provide pupils with useful written feedback and encourage them to think for themselves by responding to it.

29. The curriculum is taught by enthusiastic teachers with good subject knowledge. Teachers provide clear boundaries and have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. In the early years, clear routines help children to transition sensibly from one activity to the next. Children in the early years are interested in their learning because teachers use effective and practical learning activities, often making use of the woodland environment. Staff use good-quality resources, which further motivates pupils to take an interest in their learning.
30. Leaders with responsibility for pupils who have SEND demonstrate a clear understanding of pupils' individual needs. They maintain a comprehensive SEND register which is supplemented by detailed individual learning plans. A leader with responsibility for pupils who have SEND regularly spends time in the early years supporting teachers and children. Pupils with dyslexia benefit from high-quality support as part of the school's continuing commitment to meet the learning needs of these pupils. Leaders ensure that teachers are provided with suitable information about pupils who have SEND. They carry out regular learning walks to ensure that recommended strategies are implemented to meet pupils' needs. Pupils who have SEND make good progress from their starting points.
31. Pupils who speak EAL are well supported through initial assessments and subsequent individualised learning plans containing personal targets that are reviewed termly. Teachers ensure that pupils who speak EAL can access lessons by providing them with word banks. Targeted support ensures that they make good progress in English. International boarders are well supported in their academic work with members of the boarding staff supervising homework and helping when required.
32. Leaders ensure that the after-school activities programme is of a suitably high quality, well-resourced and run by experienced staff. Pupils, including boarders, benefit from a wide range of activities including fencing, martial arts, real tennis, golf and swimming. There is ample opportunity for pupils to develop their social and creative skills through activities such as art, coding and drama.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation

- 33. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

34. Leaders implement a comprehensive PSHE curriculum that is developed in-house and fully embedded in the curriculum. The curriculum effectively explores topics such as empathy and physical and mental health and actively promotes respect for all people. Leaders promote pupils' spiritual and moral understanding through theology, philosophy and religion (TPR) lessons and weekly chapel services. These opportunities help pupils to develop an awareness of their own beliefs and values and to reflect on wider spiritual questions.
35. Leaders actively promote the development of pupils' self-knowledge. For example, in PSHE, pupils learn to be open about their own feelings and to recognise the feelings of others. Boarding activities, such as a creative activity involving costume design and performance, further help to enhance pupils' self-confidence.
36. Leaders prioritise pupils' physical wellbeing. They ensure that pupils receive high-quality physical education, active play and regular access to sporting opportunities. Sport is inclusive and well taught, fostering enjoyment, teamwork and healthy competition. Pupils understand the importance of maintaining an active and healthy lifestyle. In the early years, children's fine and gross motor skills are developed through activities such as mark-making and supervised climbing.
37. Pupils are provided with nutritious lunchtime meals and, for those children who board, at supper time. In the early years, children's eating habits are appropriately supervised. From Year 3 onwards, pupils are encouraged to become increasingly independent in their food choices. In the boarding houses, pupils have access to drinking water and can prepare their own food at suitable times. The taught curriculum supports the pupils' personal and physical health. For example, in science pupils learn about food groups and hygiene regimes, and the importance of remaining healthy through involvement in sport and spending time outside.
38. Leaders ensure that relationships and sex education (RSE) is reviewed regularly and at least annually. They provide parents with clear communication on content and consult them through surveys, giving them the opportunity to share their views when leaders consider making curriculum changes. Leaders ensure that staff are well supported to teach the RSE curriculum and that they have appropriate resources which enable current and emerging issues to be addressed. Pupils who speak EAL are provided with additional support, such as subject-specific vocabulary lists to help them access the RSE curriculum. Consequently, pupils gain knowledge and understanding of healthy relationships in a structured, age-appropriate and responsive way.
39. Leaders ensure that the behaviour policy is understood by staff and pupils and implemented effectively. Incidents of poor behaviour are recorded on a central system and trends are analysed. Leaders promptly respond to concerns raised by pupils about the behaviour of others and take effective steps to tackle these concerns. Pupils understand that poor behaviour may lead to sanctions and value the rewards available for acting in line with the school's values.
40. Incidents of bullying are rare and those that do occur are dealt with effectively by leaders. Leaders use centrally maintained bullying logs and behaviour records to monitor and respond to trends. Pupils know what to do and who to speak to should they encounter potential bullying. As a result, they feel safe and supported.

41. The school premises and accommodation are well maintained. Leaders carry out comprehensive health and safety checks. They conduct regular fire evacuation drills, including during boarding time, and implement any action points identified in fire risk assessments. External audits further support the effective management of risk and ensure that the school complies with current regulatory requirements. Boarding accommodation is well maintained, safe and comfortable.
42. Well-qualified staff administer first aid promptly and competently in facilities that are well resourced. Staff receive suitable first aid training and understand how to take effective action. All teaching and support staff in the early years receive suitable paediatric first aid training. Medicines are stored securely and comprehensive records are maintained of any administration of first aid or medication. Communication with parents is prompt and systematic.
43. A strong and visible adult presence at break and mealtimes reinforces a culture of care. Staff ensure pupils' safety while allowing them to play freely within the agreed bounds. As a result, pupils across year groups feel safe around the school during break times and know they can speak to trusted adults if they are worried.
44. Leaders maintain accurate admission and attendance registers. Attendance registers are completed in line with statutory guidance. Leaders take a proactive approach to tackling low attendance. They track pupil absence, liaise with pastoral staff and contact parents if a pupil's attendance falls below a certain level. Leaders inform the local authority within the expected timeframes if pupils leave or join the school at non-standard times of transition.
45. A suitable range of after-school activities contributes positively and meaningfully to children's development in the early years. Activities such as cookery, melody makers, dance, construction and fencing help to promote children's physical, personal and emotional development.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

- 46. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

47. Leaders encourage pupils to interact positively with one another in line with the school's values of kindness and concern for others. In the early years, staff model respectful relationships, and in whole-school assemblies in the prep school, pupils celebrate others' achievements in a genuinely supportive way. In the boarding houses, positive relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils are evident and contribute towards creating a happy boarding environment. In PSHE lessons, pupils learn about having respect for all people, including through the exploration of significant figures and events during Black History Month.
48. Leaders encourage older pupils to accept responsibility through the range of leadership roles that are open to them. Year 8 pupils act as role models for younger pupils by volunteering as peer mentors and running activities such as organised games, junior story time and colouring-in and drop-in sessions at break time.
49. Leaders enhance pupils' economic understanding through a well-planned PSHE programme. Pupils across the school learn how to handle money, for example, by helping with the running of stalls at charity events. Pupils in Year 8 learn about aspects of banking and work on environmental projects that link to saving money through sustainable actions, while pupils in Year 7 explore trading as part of understanding the development of a country and its resources.
50. Leaders ensure that pupils benefit from a comprehensive and well-planned careers programme, carefully tailored to their age and stage of education. The careers programme is thoughtfully linked to diversity and inclusion. For example, older pupils are given an insight into how careers can be adapted for people with disabilities such as provision for someone with epilepsy, a wheelchair user or a person with an assistance dog. Children in the early years gain an understanding of public services, facilitated by visits from the emergency services, and older pupils learn about public services in PSHE lessons.
51. Pupils in Year 8 receive effective support with their transition to senior school. Leaders provide them with a survival guide and they consider strategies to maintain positive mental health during this period of change. Pupils feel confident about end-of-year examinations and speak enthusiastically about moving on to their senior school.
52. Leaders ensure that pupils are provided with authentic experiences that help them to develop a respect for the law. In TPR, for example, Year 8 pupils explore the concept of justice by interacting with a former lawyer, thereby developing a sense of right and wrong.
53. Leaders ensure that pupils are well prepared for their future lives and contribute positively to British society. The early introduction of Greek, Latin and Mandarin enables younger pupils to explore and compare the values of different cultures with British values, deepening their understanding of similarities and differences. All pupils participate in the democratic process by voting for the school council and eco committee. Through charitable and community activities such as writing to elderly residents, visiting dementia homes and performing with the chapel choir, pupils develop a sense of how they and their school connect to the wider community.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

54. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

55. Safeguarding arrangements at the school are effective. Leaders take a comprehensive and proactive approach to safeguarding that is integrated across all areas of provision and actively promotes the welfare of all pupils. They ensure that all staff and governors understand their role in protecting pupils from harm. Leaders are aware of any specific and contextual safeguarding risks that might arise and take appropriate steps to mitigate them.
56. Safeguarding practices reflect current statutory guidance. However, at the start of the inspection, the safeguarding policy did not reflect the latest updates to statutory guidance. Leaders amended the policy to match the school's practice during the inspection.
57. Leaders ensure that staff know how to raise low-level concerns if they have any worries about adults working in the school. They maintain a detailed log of such concerns and follow up all issues promptly and effectively. Leaders make staff aware of the need to challenge visitors who are not suitably identified.
58. All leaders are suitably trained in safeguarding practice to the appropriate levels. Staff and governors receive effective safeguarding training as part of their induction and subsequently through annual training and regular updates, in order to keep abreast of statutory safeguarding guidance. A designated safeguarding governor who has relevant experience regularly meets leaders to discuss safeguarding issues, training and policy implementation.
59. Leaders ensure that staff understand how to raise a concern about a pupil and how to manage a referral should one arise. The designated safeguarding lead keeps suitable records of safeguarding concerns and the school's responses to these. Leaders communicate effectively with external safeguarding agencies, including the local authority designated officer and children's services, referring concerns when necessary and seeking advice and guidance.
60. Leaders ensure that pupils feel well supported and know how to raise a concern with a trusted adult, including through the independent person.
61. Leaders have a thorough knowledge of safer recruitment procedures and receive appropriate training. An accurate single central record of appointments is meticulously maintained, and leaders carry out all of the required checks on staff and governors before they start work at the school. Governors regularly monitor the single central record of appointments.
62. Leaders oversee appropriate systems for filtering and monitoring internet use. They follow up promptly on any alerts that they receive, and the filtering system is tested regularly in line with statutory guidance. Pupils of all ages learn how to stay safe, including online, in PSHE lessons and understand the channels available to them if they need to seek help.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

63. All the relevant Standards are met

School details

School	Westbourne House School
Department for Education number	938/6007
Registered charity number	307034
Address	Westbourne House School Coach Road Shopwyke West Sussex PO20 2BH
Phone number	01243 782739
Email address	office@westbournehouse.org
Website	www.westbournehouse.org
Proprietor	Westbourne House School Educational Trust Limited
Chair	Mr James Patrick
Headteacher	Mr Martin Barker
Age range	2 to 13
Number of pupils	304
Number of boarding pupils	66
Date of previous inspection	1 to 3 November 2022

Information about the school

64. Westbourne House School is an independent co-educational day and boarding school located in Chichester, West Sussex.
65. There are seven boarding houses, and pupils can board as weekly, full or flexi-boarders.
66. There are 46 children in the early years, comprising two Nursery classes and two Reception classes.
67. The school has identified 86 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Three pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
68. The school has identified English as an additional language for 37 pupils.
69. The school states that it aims to provide an exceptional, all-round education to its pupils, in the belief that every pupil can succeed when given the right opportunities, encouragement, self-motivation and practice. It is also committed to providing a happy boarding environment which is safe, supportive and fun so that the boarders can develop into caring, responsible, self-reliant and dependable individuals.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

14 to 16 October 2025

70. A team of five inspectors visited the school for two and a half days. The on-site inspection was quality assured by a monitor.

71. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair of governors
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- visits to boarding houses accompanied by pupils and staff
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

72. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

How are association independent schools in England inspected?

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit www.isi.net.

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For more information, please visit isi.net